

9/23/05

TO: Representative Gaffney and the House Health Policy Committee

FROM: Michael J. Shoemaker, PT, DPT, GCS
Co-Chair, State and Federal Legislative Committee
Michigan Physical Therapy Association

RE: House Bill 4893

The Michigan Physical Therapy Association would like to support a bill licensing athletic trainers in the state of Michigan. We believe that licensure of health care professionals is always in the interest of consumer safety.

We are, however, concerned with the definition of "athletic injury" in HB 4893. Our concern is that it does not accurately represent the didactic and clinical training that ATC's receive, especially those who are trained only to a bachelor's degree level. For example, the current definition would inappropriately allow any ATC to treat the following patients:

- An elderly woman with multiple medical comorbidities who falls and sprains an ankle.
- A person with a spinal cord injury sustained from any "physical activity."
- A person with dysequilibrium and vertigo resulting from a mild brain injury sustained while riding a bike.

Clearly there are limits to the scope of practice in any profession and it is the role of state law to help delineate that scope. However, there is an inherent difficulty with delineating the scope of practice of a rehabilitation professional who is not sufficiently trained to treat all potential patients with rehabilitative needs, especially those with neurologic injury or multiple medical problems. In the case of athletic trainers, there needs to be a designated population of patients who can appropriately be treated by ATC's.

In states such as Arizona, ATC's are licensed to only treat athletic injuries defined as "an injury sustained by a person in a competitive team or individual sport as a result of that person's participation or preparation for the competitive team or individual sport...and does not include treating, assessing, or evaluating a person who sustains an injury under any other circumstance." While this language is most reflective of ATC didactic and clinical training, it is perhaps too restrictive.

We would like to see language that appropriately describes ATC practice that is commensurate with ATC education and training. Any of the following possibilities would be helpful in more clearly delineating the scope of practice for athletic trainers:

- Eliminate the definition of athletic injury in its entirety, and revise the definition of athletic training as follows: "Practice of athletic training" means the prevention, assessment, treatment, and rehabilitation of athletic, **recreational, and occupational musculoskeletal injuries** under the direction and supervision of a licensed physician." or
- Insert on pg 4, line 26 "...a degree of..." before "physical strength, agility etc" and insert on page 4, line 27 after stamina "...beyond those required for usual activities of daily living." or
- Insert on pg 5, line 22 "Athletic training does not include the practice of PT, and no health care services provided by an athletic trainer shall be represented as physical therapy unless the provider is licensed as a physical therapist as provided under part 178."

We encourage you to consider any of these amendments and oppose the current language that defines an athletic injury so broadly that it does not in any way reflect the designated group of patients an ATC is trained to properly and safely rehabilitate.

Thank you for considering these comments